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Bus Service in considering the question of reduction or increase in passenger fares. I think I should require notice, if I have to give more details as to whether this amount of profit is sufficient to warrant a reduction of passenger fares and if so, to what extent they can be reduced. The hon. Member may put a separate question on this subject."

SRI S. B. ADITYAN :—"May I know, Sir, whether the Government have got any proposal to meet the surcharge on bus fares under the Bill pending before the legislature, out of the Government's savings instead of collecting it from the passengers themselves?"

THE HON. DR. U. KRISHNA RAO :—"I am very glad to inform the hon. Member that there is a proposal before the Government to exempt the Madras City Bus Transport from the operation of this new Bill, under which we propose to levy a surcharge on fares collected by operators of buses or stage carriages."

SRI V. CHAKKARAI CHETTY :—"We thank you, Sir, very much for it."

SRI K. BALASUBRAMANYA AYYAR :—"Have the figures shown in the statement been obtained after a thorough audit of the accounts of the Transport Department?"

THE HON. DR. U. KRISHNA RAO :—"There is an auditor for the department."

Elections to local bodies.

* 7. *Q.*—SRI T. PURUSHOTHAMA MUDALIAR : Will the Hon. the Minister for Local Administration be pleased to state—

(*a*) when the general elections of members of the Municipal Councils and Panchayat Boards (Ex-Union Boards) and Village Panchayats were last held;

(*b*) whether the term of these bodies is being extended from time to time;

(*c*) what action has been taken to conduct immediately elections to all District Boards, Municipalities and Panchayat Boards on the basis of adult suffrage; and

(*d*) when the elections are programmed to be held to the several local bodies stated above?

THE HON. SRI N. SANKARA REDDY :—"(*a*) For Municipal Councils in 1947; for Panchayats in 1939.

"(*b*) Yes.

"(*c*) & (*d*) Orders have already been issued to the Election Authority, namely, the Inspector of Municipal Councils and Local Boards for the conduct of elections to all municipal councils during this year on the basis of adult suffrage so

that the new councillors may come into office on 1st November 1952. The question of elections to District Boards is still under consideration.

"As regards panchayat elections, no date has been fixed. Elections will be held on adult suffrage as provided in the Madras Village Panchayats Act. Preparations are being made to hold elections to existing panchayats as soon as possible. These elections will be held in groups in each district one by one."

SRI T. PURUSHOTHAMA MUDALIAR :—" May I know, Sir, whether any representations have been made to the Government by the Madras Chamber of District Boards with regard to the postponement of elections to District Boards? "

THE HON. SRI N. SANKARA REDDY :—" I do not think that any representations have been made."

SRI T. PURUSHOTHAMA MUDALIAR :—" May I know, Sir, whether the Government have considered the question of spacing the elections to Municipalities, District Boards and Panchayats so that elections to Municipalities may be held one year, elections to District Boards the next year, and elections to Panchayats in another year, so that all elections need not be held during one and the same year? "

THE HON. SRI N. SANKARA REDDY :—" At present, elections to Municipal Councils alone have been ordered. As regards panchayat elections no date has been fixed. The question of conducting elections to District Boards is under the consideration of the Government."

SRI M. P. GOVINDA MENON :—" Sir, it is learnt from the newspapers that the Government have appointed a Sub-Committee of the Cabinet to examine the provisions of the Madras Village Panchayats Act. May I know, whether the elections to the Panchayats will be conducted after this examination by the Sub-Committee of the Cabinet is over? "

THE HON. SRI N. SANKARA REDDY :—" The Cabinet Sub-Committee which is examining this matter has not finalized its proposals. The Cabinet will go into the Sub-Committee's proposals as soon as they are submitted to them."

Constitution of separate committees for increasing the powers of the municipal councils and district boards.

* 8 *Q.*—SRI T. PURUSHOTHAMA MUDALIAR : Will the Hon. the Minister for Local Administration be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether separate committees have been constituted to consider the question of increasing the powers of the municipal councils and district boards;